

Oral Comment from Houma, Louisiana Public Meeting  
October 19, 2005  
Ramada Inn, Houma Louisiana  
Commenter: Douglas Rhodes

I'd like to make a comment on the ground water that's being dumped in the Gulf of Mexico. Can you tell me that they don't have mercury and toxic chemicals in that ground water?

MR. JOHNSON: No. There will be no toxic chemicals or mercury going into the Gulf. All the discharge is tested and the salt is pure salt that comes out of the salt domes.

MR. RHODES: Well, I worked in the oilfield for 38 years and I know oil itself is so polluted until it ain't funny, and this ground water is going to be passing through that oil, **to be deposited in the gulf.**

MR. JOHNSON:

I can answer part of your question relating to the toxicity of the discharge. We have permits for those discharges, and part of the permitting from EPA, and also the state agency, which requires that we test the actual samples of the water with shrimp and minnows to determine whether the water itself has any toxic effect, and those samples are required to be done initially quarterly, and then twice a year, and there's a very rigid methodology for doing that. If those minnows or shrimp show any effects from it, then we have to do additional testing and sampling. So even though there's nothing in it except salt water, and even though we have control, in terms of oil and grease and pH and other chemical parameters, in addition to all of that, the toxicity itself — it's actually sampled against organisms. We've had experience with this for many, many years and have never had any adverse toxicity effects.

DOUGLAS RHODES: Thank you, sir. The other question is we're in a flood-prone area. Can this site take eight or nine foot of water from a category 5 hurricane?

MR. JOHNSON: Absolutely. You mean will the oil leak out into the water and all that?

DOUGLAS RHODES: Yeah. Suppose the water covers your facilities.

MR. JOHNSON: The oil is all stored two and a half thousand feet below the surface. They're all pressure tight. They're capped off. They're totally sealed. There's no way they can leak back into the surface waters.

DOUGLAS RHODES: What about your tanks above the ground?

MR. JOHNSON: Except for one site, we don't have any tanks — we don't plan to have any tanks above ground.

DOUGLAS RHODES: My question has been answered. Thank you.

MS. QUICK: Thank you very much. That certainly was a mixture in terms of the gentleman asking clarifying questions and also comments, and we did hear from you that there were some issues that you want to be sure that the environmental impact statement looks at, which has to do with the safety issues, both in terms of chemicals that might reach the gulf and the effects of the storm on the facilities. Anybody else have a comment or a clarifying question?